are not Government departments. They should not be run by Government departments. The whole exercise for identifying the persons for appointment to top positions in the public sector enterprises is required to be initiated much in advance of the retirement of the incumbent so that no time is lost in taking a decision with regard to the installing of a new incumbent soon after the retirement of a top executive. The entire process should be reviewed in its entirety to identify the causes of delay and to take suitable remedial measures to avoid delays in appointing persons to head the public sector enterprises. I hope, the matter will receive the attention of the various Ministries

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA (Punjab): Madam, I would like to associate myself with this. And there is no doubt that the public sector's bad performance is primarily due to their being topless, most of them.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (Uttar Pradesh): Don't be vulgar, General.

Disrespect shown towards President by Doordarshan and A.I.R.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY (Karnataka): Madam Deputy Chairman, I wish to refer to a very important but somewhat overlooked issue, the issue of the President and his Independence Day Message and what place we should give him in the country and what place his Message should get in All India Radio and Doordarshan.

Madam, before I make a few remarks, may I draw your attention and the attention of the House to the basic fact that the Address of the President on the eve of Independence Day every year is his exclusive privilege, his right. It cannot be censored, changed or abridged by the Government. That has been the tradition and that has been the practice observed for all these 40 years. Whatever he says is his own. Madam, we want the Parliamentary institutions to be taken seriously by everybody, especially so by the Government agencies. Under our Constitution, the President, the House of the People and the Council of States form the Parliament. President is a part of the Parliament. It is all the reason more why we should observe strictly the norms and conventions that we have established in the past. This year, Madam, unfortunately, Doordarshan in particular, which is a Government agency, has committed in my view a gross violation of propriety. The President delivered his Message on the 14th, i.e., Sunday, this month and it was taken up well by the All India Radio, a sister agency, and on the 15th by all the newspapers in India and his speech was prominently displayed. But unfortunately Doordarshan did not show the same discretion, did not give the same prominence which was given by the press, and by the All India Radio. I am glad my friend, Mr. H. K. L. Bhagat is here. I wish he would take note of my remarks.

SHRI SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY (Uttar Pradesh): He is asleep. He does not know what you are speaking. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: He is covering up his eyes by dark glasses. He is very much awake.

Madam, while All India Radio gave headline news in its bulletin, the same is not observed by the Doordarshan. In the case of Doordarshan on the 14th in the Hindi news bulletin at 8.40 p.m. on Sunday, no headline was given. But in the case of English bulletin at 9.30 p.m. it was ranked 5th in its bulletin.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA (Andhra Pradesh): That is the treatment they give to the Head of the State.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: In the past the President's speech occupied the first place, the prime

[Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy]

place in the news bulletins of Doordarshan. Why this was not done now? But contrast, next day, on the 15th, the Prime Minister's visit to Rajghat and his Independence Day speech got top prominence for 9 minutes. There was uninterrupted coverage of his visit to Rajghat and the speech he delivered from the ramparts of the Red Fort. I have no objection for that, though some friends may have. But why Rashtrapati's speech, Message, was denigrated why was it devalued? Is he inferior to the Prime Minister? (*Interruptions*). You are devaluing, denigrating the institution of Rashtrapati. Why? In my view, Doordarshan has committed a gross indiscretion; it is both of omission and commission on its part. Why was it done? It was done according to me, because of the content of the speech, because Mr. R. Venkataraman delivered a forthright speech on electoral reform. He warned the nation that election is sacred and no political party, whether the ruling party or the opposition, and no official agency should subvert and sabotage the electoral process. He quoted Dr. Radhakrishnan and he said: "Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan sounded a warning that democracy would degenerate into a tyranny if the opposition groups were not allowed to criticise fairly, freely and frankly, the Government's policies. But at the same time, this right to criticism should not degenerate into wilful hampering and obstruction of the work of Parliament." He appealed to all political parties in the country not to disrupt or subvert the electoral process. Madam, because of this forthright statement of Rashtrapati, this has been downgraded maybe, otherwise they would not have done so. May I, therefore, say in the end...

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE (Maharashtra): Maybe, he had Faridabad in mind.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: ... that an enquiry should be made against Doordarshan and those who are responsible for devaluing the President and indulging in such gross indiscretion, should be punished.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu): Madam Deputy Chairman, the whole country is shocked and pained at the atrocious and unpardonable insulting attitude of Doordarshan over the coverage given to the President's address to the nation on the eve of the Independence Day. Doordarshan headlined it as fourth item in its Hindi news bulletin at 8.40 p.m. on Sunday, and did not bother to headline it at all in its 9.30 p.m. English news bulletin. In the past, it has been the convention of All-India Radio and Doordarshan to lead with President's address in the evening bulletins. For the first time in the history of independent India, the Government media—Doordarshan—dared to slight and belittle and denigrate the message of the highest authority of India, the Head of the State. It is nothing but an insult to the Head of the State. Madam, it is because the President in his message appealed to all sections of this country, all political parties, to uphold democracy and Parliamentary system. Therefore, I would like to know from the Government whether it is because of even-handedness with which he pinpointed the responsibility of all political parties to ensure against breaches of election procedures. Madam, Doordarshan has committed this grave wrong against the Head of the State, against the institution of President. Therefore, those who are responsible for this crime — I term it as "crime' — should be pulled up by this Government; otherwise, Government will be put in the dock. Government owes an explanation to the country and the Government should come forward with an explanation.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Punjab): An address by the President of India to the nation is undou-

btedly a very important event and in the past, both the AIR and Doordarshan have covered it as a lead news. The present instance is undoubtedly a case where the Doordarshan seems to have los perspective and blurred its priorities. I agree with the hon. Members when they say that an impropriety has been committed by Doordarshan in not giving the due place, the due coverage and the due importance to the Addless of the President to the nation. But Madam, permit me to say that I find it wholly unfair to allege anything beyond that in this matter.

Madam, we must not forget that the Address of the President was on the 14th August and it had to be covered thereafter in the news bulletin on the 14th itself. The Prime Minister addresed the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the 15th August. We did not expect Doordarshan to repeat the same mistake as it did on the 14th August in not giving the due place to the Address of the Prime Minister. But to say that it has not been given due coverage because the President called for immediate electoral reforms is again a travesty of truth, travesty of facts. We should remember on this occasion that it was the Prime Minister who called for a national debate on electoral reforms. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA (Rajasthan): Madam, this is not a debate. He is answering the Special Mention. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: He should confine himself to the Special Mention, to the parameters laid down by the Chair. He is going beyond the scope. (*Interruptions*).

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is not going beyond the scope. He is giving his views as you gave yours. How can you prohibit that? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: Does he justify the treatment given by the media, by the Doordarshan? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: I am not objecting to the point raised by hon. Members. What impelled me to say this is that there seems to be some malicious intent apparent in the way the point has been put forth. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Madam, on a point of order? (*Interruption*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No point of order.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Kindly listen to my point of order first. He is casting aspersions on the Members here. How can he do that? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA (Karnataka): What were you doing when Mr. Dipen Ghosh said it? (*Interruptions*) It was not malicious then and is it malicious only now, Mr. Morarka?

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: We are unanimous on the question of according due priority to any event of national importance such as the Address of the President to the Nation. But I do hope that we will confine ourselves to the particular issue and do not blur the issue before us by other considerations. I agree with the hon. Members that there should be an enquiry into the matter because I also feel that it is not once but on quite a few occasions that the Doordarshan...

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: But it is for the first time that such a treatment has been given to the Address of the President.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: I am not mitigating the importance and gravity of that. Therefore, I do feel that it is time an appropriate appraisal of the working of Doordarshan is carried out and objectivity and clarity is brought about in its programmes.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): Madam, I would straight away express my unqualified regret to the President, to this House and to hon. Members. I agree that this should have been given the lead in the News as it has been done in the past. As soon as I came to know of it—I have also read it in the Press—I told Doordarshan that they have committed a mistake (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: What were you doing for the last three days?

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT: I am reacting to what you have said. I have asked Doordarshan... (*Interruptions*)

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please listen to him.

SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT: I am speaking with the permission of the Chair. I am reacting to what you have said. I accept your point. I have asked Doordarshan to be careful in future, that they should not commit such mistakes at all and that lead should be given to such news items.

(*Interruptions*)

It is, of course, too much to say that the motive was to keep off the views of the President. This was not the motive. The views of the President were not kept off. The Government has the highest respect for the views expressed by the President.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: It is deliberate mischief.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: What action has been taken against the person responsibl? Mere regret is not enough' You should take some action.

Deplorable state of Affairs at the regional passport office at Shashtri Bhavan

DR. MOHD. HASIM KIDWAI (Uttar Pradesh): Madam Deputy Chairman, through you I want to draw the attention of the Government, especially of the Ministry of External Affairs, to the highly deplorable state of affairs prevailing at the Regional Passport Office at Shastri Bhavan. In the first place, those who apply for passport do not get it for months together, nor do they get any reply to their queries. They have to go daily to the Passport Office and waste their time in vain.

The Public Relation Officer who is supposed to listen to the grivences of the people and redress them does not listen to them. The general complaint is that he misbehaves with them. Stern action should therefore be taken against such an anti-people official.

The official rate for a passport form is Rs. 5, but those are sold to the public by the office clerks at the rate of Rs. 7 per form. These extra two rupees per form go to the pocket of the selling clerk. While a person can get two forms at a time, those who work as agents and fill up those forms can purchase as many forms as they like at the rate of Rs. 7 per form. I therefore request the External Affairs Ministry to institute an enquiry into the working of the Regional Passport Office at Shastri Bhavan and take action against the PRO who is extremely discourteous to the people and see to it that the agents do not purchase a large number of passport forms and that only the official rate is charged from the people and all the fraudulent practices are stopped. The staff should also be increased at this Passport Office. Thank you.